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PELHAM EDGAR, PH.D.

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PELHAM EDGAR, Ph.D.

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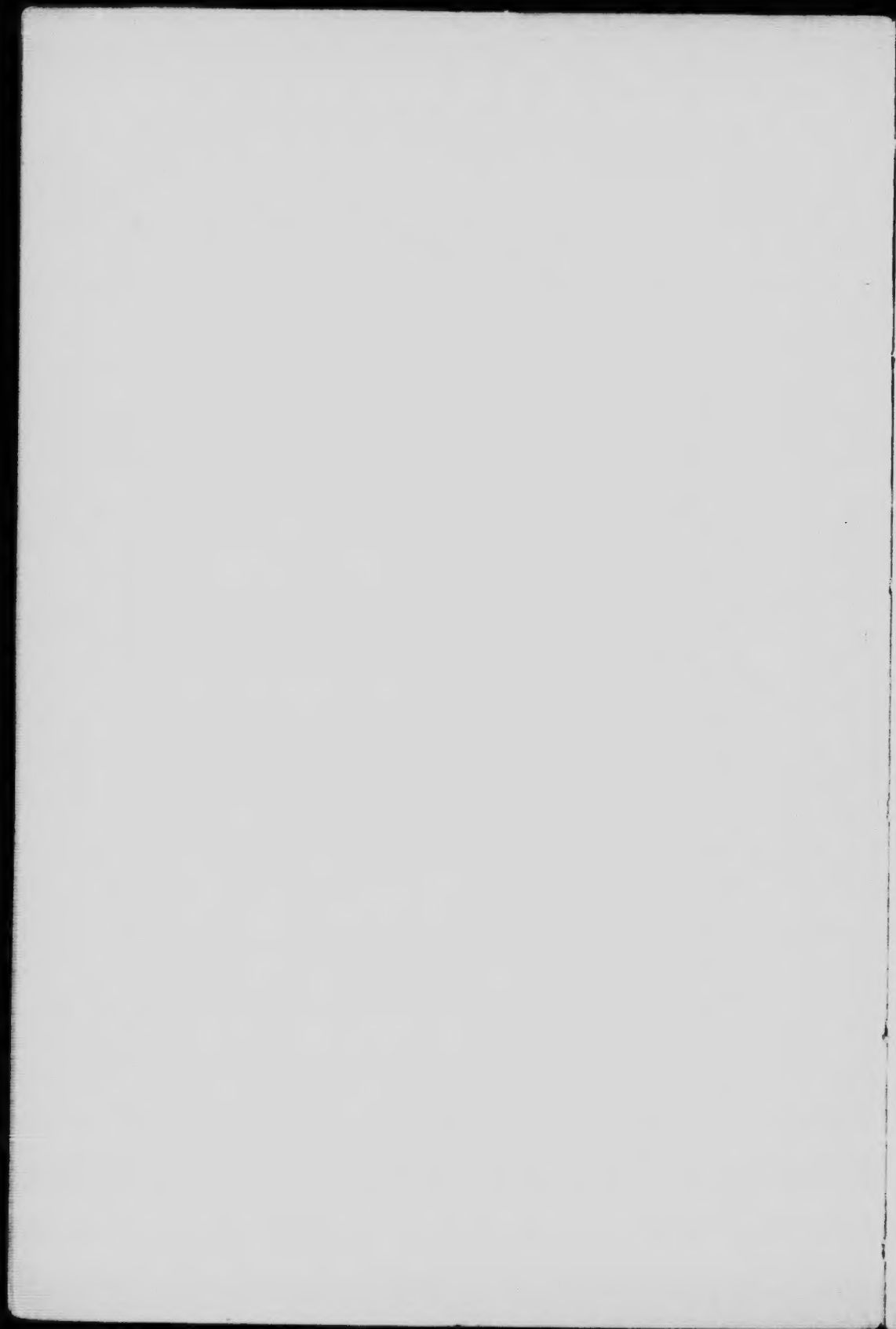
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COLERIDGE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, on October 21st, 1772. His father dying in 1781, the boy was sent to Christ's Hospital, the famous London charity school. Coleridge, at the age of fifteen, sought to relieve the monotony of school life by becoming apprenticed to a cobbler, but luckily an irate schoolmaster stood between him and the realization of this freak. After ten years of somewhat dreary school life, he was, in January, 1791, appointed an exhibitioner at Jesus College, Cambridge. His "discharge" from the school bears the date of September 7th, 1791, and in the following month he went into residence at Cambridge. His life at the University was uneventful, save for one peculiar incident—his erratic enlistment as a private in the King's Regiment of Light Dragoons. His friends eventually bought him out, and he received his discharge in April, 1794. He returned a penitent to Cambridge, where he was publicly admonished by the Master of his College in the presence of the Fellows. In December of the same year he left the University without taking a degree.

Coleridge had never been a systematic student, but had been since his childhood a wide and omnivorous reader, and had evinced a growing enthusiasm for poetry. While at Cambridge he published a drama in verse—*The Fall of Robespierre*—the result of the joint labours of Coleridge and his Oxford friend, Robert Southey.

After leaving Cambridge Coleridge settled in lodgings at Bristol, where he gained a scanty livelihood by writing verses for a printer of that place named Cottle. On the strength of his meagre earnings he ventured to marry a Miss Sarah Fricker on October 4th, 1795.

The young couple settled at Clevedon, in Somersetshire. Here Coleridge wrote some of his well-known poems, and established a weekly journal called *The Watchman*, which did not survive its early numbers. The laudanum habit, which proved so fatal to his happiness and so injurious to his intellectual powers, was apparently contracted about this time.

On the last day of 1796 the Coleridge family moved to Nether Stowey, in Somersetshire. Here, in close neighbourhood to the poet Wordsworth, they lived for nearly two years, and here the two poets formulated those poetic theories which were destined to exert so fruitful an influence on English literature. Coleridge wrote his drama *Osorio* (later called *Remorse*) in 1797, and by March, 1798, his *Ancient Mariner* was completed. To this creative period we likewise owe the commencement of a remarkable poem, *Christabel*, which was added to at a later date, but was never completed. Coleridge also contributed a number of political articles to the *Morning Post*, and frequently preached in neighbouring Unitarian pulpits. His material hardships were lessened by the receipt of an annuity of £150 (subsequently reduced) from Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood.

From September, 1798, to June, 1799, Coleridge resided in Germany, familiarizing himself with German metaphysical thought. Late in 1799 he returned to England, and at first devoted himself to journalism in London. In July of 1800 he settled down at Greta Hall, Keswick, in the Lake Country, where Wordsworth was now residing. In 1804 he sailed to Malta in

search of health, and passing through Italy returned to England in August, 1806. The remaining incidents in his life may be briefly summarized. A second journalistic venture, *The Friend*, lived from June, 1809, to March, 1810. In October of the latter year he left the Lake Country, and lived with a Mr. and Mrs. Morgan in London and the neighbourhood for a space of six years, namely to 1816. In 1815 a critical volume, *Biographia Literaria*, was published. From 1816 to his death in 1834, he lived principally at Highgate with a surgeon named Gillman. His interests were now chiefly theological and metaphysical, and through his prose work, but chiefly by his remarkable powers of conversation, he exerted a deep influence upon all who came in contact with him.

On July 25th, 1834, Coleridge died. As a poet, he is remarkable for a weirdness of fancy, and for the exquisitely musical flow of his verse.

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis not's enarrabit, et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat interea non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tamquam in tabula, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

T. BURNET, *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country. [1798.]

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER IN SEVEN PARTS

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

An ancient
Mariner
meeteth
three Gal-
lants bidden
to a wed-
ding feast,
and detain-
eth one.

The Bridegroom's doors are open wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, graybeard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

-
1. The abrupt opening is characteristic of ballad poetry.
 3. glittering. Show the appropriateness of the word. Note the method of indirect description.
 7. Note the internal rime. Point out other examples. Observe the effectiveness of the contrast expressed in the opening stanzas—worldly joy on the one hand, spiritual mystery on the other.

10-12. Note the rich rime, *he : he*.

12. **Eftsoons** = *soon after, forthwith*.

The Wedding-Guest
is spellbound
by the eye of
the old sea-
faring man,
and con-
strained to
hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
15 And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
20 The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

The Mariner 25
tells how
the ship
sailed south-
ward with
good wind
and fair
weather, till
it reached
the Line.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
30 Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

13. **He holds**, etc. The mesmeric spell is complete, and there is no longer need to hold him with his hand, as in line 9.

15, 16. Contributed by Wordsworth.

18. **hear**. Loosely rimes as *hear*: *mariner* are a common license in popular ballads. Point out other examples. Compare lines 38-40 for a repetition of lines 18-20 (another ballad characteristic). See also lines 588-590 for a recurrence to the same idea.

20. **The bright-eyed Mariner**. Epithets and figures are of the simplest and most conventional character in the old ballads. Is *bright-eyed* merely conventional here?

22. **drop**. Here used in the nautical sense—to put out to sea with the ebbing tide.

25 f. Simplicity is the prevailing quality in Coleridge's descriptions.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest
 heareth the
 bridal music; but the
 35 Mariner
 continueth
 his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot choose but hear;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong:
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
 And chased us south along.

The ship
 driven by a
 storm to-
 wards the
 south pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
 As who pursued with yell and blow
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,
 And forward bends his head,
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
 And southward aye we fled.

45

50

And now there came both mist and snow,
 And it grew wondrous cold:
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
 As green as emerald.

37. **The Wedding-Guest he beat.** In the ballads, the repetition of the subject was not uncommon; e. g.,

"Our king he kept a false stewarde."

Sir Aldingar, line 1 (*Percy's Reliques*).

45. **With sloping masts.** Analyze the figure in this stanza, and develop its full force.

46. **As who pursued.** Supply the antecedent. Its omission is archaic. Cf.:

"As who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle.'"

Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, I, i.

52-54. cold: emerald. 1798 edition, *and: emerauld.*

The land of
ice, and of
fearful
sounds,
where no
living thing
was to be
seen.

55 And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
60 The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great
sea-bird,
called the
Albatross,
came
through the
snow-fog,
and was re-
ceived with
great joy and
hospitality.

At length did come an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came;
65 As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
70 The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the
Albatross
proveth a
bird of good
omen, and
followeth
the ship as

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

55. **And through the drifts.** The probable meaning is that the snow-capped icebergs sent a dreary light through the drifting mist and snow, or shed a "dismal sheen" upon the drifting ice-packs.—**the snowy clifts.** *Clifts* is a secondary form of *cliffs*, and probably influenced by *clift*, a secondary form of *cleft*.

56. **sheen.** Derive the word. Cf. line 314 for its use as an adjective

57. **ken** = *to see*. More commonly a noun.

61. Note the onomatopœic effect.

64. **Thorough** = *through*. Cf. *thoroughfare*.

69. **thunder-fit.** A noise resembling thunder.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
 It perched for vespers nine;
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
 white,
 Glimmered the white moon-shine."

75 it returned
 northward,
 through fog
 and floating
 ice.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
 Why look'st thou so?"—"With my crossbow
 I shot the Albatross.

The ancient
 Mariner
 80 inhospitably
 killeth the
 pious bird of
 good omen.

PART II

The sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left
 Went down into the sea.

85

And the good south wind still blew behind,
 But no sweet bird did follow,
 Nor any day, for food or play,
 Came to the mariners' hollo!

90

And I had done a hellish thing,
 And it would work 'em woe:
 For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow!

His ship-
 mates cry
 out against
 the ancient
 Mariner, for
 killing the
 bird of good
 luck.

76. **vespers**=*evenings*. Latin *vesper*, evening star, evening.
Cf.: "Black vespers pageants."

Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, xiv, 8.

77. **Whiles**. *Cf.* the adverbial "*s*" of *eftsoons*, line 12. It is an archaic ballad form.

79. **God save thee**. The dramatic force of the interruption gives added intensity to the confession wrung from the Mariner. What does the story gain by the character of the Wedding-Guest?

83. **The Sun now rose**. The course of the vessel is indicated by the same poetic expedient as above in lines 25 f.

95 Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when
the fog
cleared off,
they justify
the same,
and thus
make them-
selves ac-
complices in
the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair
breeze con-
tinues; the
ship enters
the Pacific
Ocean, and
sails north-
ward, even
until it
reaches the
Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
105 We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship
hath been
suddenly
becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
110 The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

115 Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;

97. **head.** State the grammatical relation of this word. Why did the sun previously rise "dim and red"?

98. **uprist** = *uprose*. A Chaucerian form, and usually employed as a substantive.

101. The crew render themselves accomplices in crime.

103 f. Note the alliteration throughout this stanza.

107. **the sails dropt down.** This does not mean that they were lowered, for see lines 311, 312.

111-115. Note the accuracy and minuteness of the observation.

115. **Day after day.** What force does the repetition give to this passage? Cf. lines 119, 121, 125, 143 f., etc.

As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the
Albatross
120 begins to be
avenged.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

123

About, about, in reel and rout
The death fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

130

And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had
followed
them: one of
the invisible
inhabitants
of this plan-
et, neither
departed
souls nor

angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!

The Ship-
mates in
140 their sore

120. **And all the boards.** *And* is here equivalent to *and yet*.
Cf.: "Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,
And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?"
Shakespeare, *Richard III*, II, i.

133. **fathom.** Parse.

distress
would fain
throw the
whole guilt
on the
ancient
Mariner: in
sign whereof
they hang
the dead sea-
bird round
his neck.

Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

The ancient
Mariner
beholdeth a
sign in the
element afar
off.

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
145 A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
150 And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
155 As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him
to be a ship;
and at a dear
ransom he
freeth his
speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
160 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:

152. **wist** = *know*. (Cf. *I throw*.)

155. **dodged**. Comment on the use of the word here. Is it dignified? What, in brief, was Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction?—**water-sprite**. *Sprite* is a doublet of *spirit*.

157. **with black lips baked**. Explain the appropriateness of the labials.

Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of
joy!
165

See! See! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

And horror
follows.
For can it
be a ship
that comes
onward
170 without
wind or tide?

The western wave was all aflame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly 175
Betwixt us and the Sun.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth
him but the
skeleton of
a ship.
180

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?

And its ribs
185 are seen as
bars on the
face of the

164. **Gramercy** = French *grand merci*, great thanks. An exclamation expressive of gratitude mingled with surprise.

166. **As they**. Supply the ellipsis.

170. **She steadies**, etc. She sails on an even keel.

179, 180. Develop the force of the simile.

182. **How fast**, etc. The repetition expresses the relentless approach of the phantom ship.

184. **gossameres** = fine-spun cobwebs. Literally = goose-sumner, alluding to the downy appearance of the film, and to the time of its appearance.

185 f. The gruesomeness of detail in the 1798 text was largely eliminated in the revision.

setting Sun.
The Spectre-woman
and her
Death-
mate, and
no other on
board the
skeleton-
ship.

Like vessel,
like crew!

And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

190 Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and
Life-in-
Death have
diced for the
ship's crew,
and she
(the latter)
winneth the
ancient
Mariner.

195 The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:

No twilight 200
within the
courts of the
Sun.

At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising
of the Moon,

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,

205 My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;

From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar

210 The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

198. **and whistles thrice.** Whistling at sea brings on a storm, according to the superstition.

199, 200. The sudden closing in of night within the tropics is magnificently described in two brief lines.

204, 205. **Fear at my heart,** etc. Discuss the trope.

211. **Within the nether tip.** What poetic license exists here?

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
 Too quick for groan or sigh,
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
 And cursed me with his eye.

One after
 another,

215

Four times fifty living men,
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
 They dropped down one by one.

His ship-
 mates drop
 down dead.

The souls did from their bodies fly—
 They fled to bliss or woe!
 And every soul, it passed me by,
 Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

220 But Life-in-
 Death
 begins her
 work on
 the ancient
 Mariner.

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
 I fear thy skinny hand!
 And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
 As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The Wed-
 ding-Guest
 225 feareth that
 a Spirit is
 talking to
 him;

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
 And thy skinny hand so brown."—

212 *by* = *under*.

213. **Too quick.** This has been explained according to its original meaning of "living," as in the expression "the quick and the dead." Anglo-Saxon *cwic*. It seems better to take it in its usual sense = *swiftly*, and to supply an ellipsis, such as, "they fell too *quick* for groan or sigh."

217. **Four times fifty.** A poetic periphrasis.

218. **thump: lump.** What is the effect of the rime?

223. **my cross-bow.** The events of the poem did not therefore occur after the sixteenth century. The souls in leaving the bodies make an angry sound in the Mariner's guilty ears.

224. **I fear thee, etc.** Compare the Wedding-Guest's interruptions now with those at the outset.

226, 227. Contributed by Wordsworth.

But the
ancient
Mariner
assureth
him of his
bodily life,
and proceed-
eth to relate
his horrible
penance.

230 "Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!

This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,

Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on

235 My soul in agony.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm.

The many men so beautiful!

And they all dead did lie:

And a thousand thousand slimy things

Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth
that they
should live
and so many
lie dead.

240 I looked upon the rotting sea,

And drew my eyes away;

I looked upon the rotting deck,

And there the dead men lay.

I looked to Heaven and tried to pray;

245 But or ever a prayer had gusht,

A wicked whisper came, and made

My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,

And the balls like pulses beat;

234. **Never a** = *not one*.

236. **The many men**, etc. His soul is full of reproach that Death should be so ruthless and wanton in his choice of victims, while sparing himself, the chief offender, and the debased creatures of the slime. There is no regeneration possible for the heart which harbors contempt or pride.

244. **I looked to Heaven**, etc. Why could the Mariner not pray? What spiritual significance may be attached to this? Cf. the King's speech in *Hamlet*:

"Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent."
Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III, iii.

245. **OR EVER** = *before ever*.

245-247. **gusht: dust**. Imperfect rime.

For the sky and the sea, and the sea and ²⁵⁰
the sky

Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the
curse liveth
for him in
the eye of
the dead
men.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye! ²⁶⁰
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

In his lone-
liness and
fixedness he
yearneth
²⁶⁵ toward the
journeying
Moon, and
the stars
that still so-

jour, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,

254. **reek**. Literally, *smoke*, but here probably *smell*. Cf. German *riechen*, to smell.

261. **Seven days**, etc. Seven is a mystic number.

263 f. Do these lines, which attribute a healing power to Nature, correspond with the view expressed in the *Ode to Dejection* especially stanza iv?

267-281. These lines show a strong romantic feeling for color. Who are the great masters of color in English poetry? What other fine color effects are there in this poem?

270 The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light
of the Moon
he beholdeth
God's crea-
tures of the
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,

275 And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship

I watched their rich attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,

280 They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty
and their
happiness.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,

He blesseth 285
them in his
heart.

And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell
begins to
break.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free

290 The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!

270. **charmed.** Latin *carmen*. Explain the force of the word here in connection with its derivation.

271. **red.** What is the syntactical relation of this word?

282 f. Sympathy redeems the original offence of cruelty.

290. **The Albatross fell off.** With what may this be compared in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*?

She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, 295
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

By grace of
the holy
Mother, the
ancient
Mariner is
refreshed
300 with rain.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere. 310

He heareth
sounds,
310 and seeth
strange
sights and
commotions
in the sky
and the
element.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about! 315
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

297. *silly* = *blessed*. Shortened from early modern English *seely*, German *selig*.

300. *And when*, etc. Observe the metrical movement of this line.

303. *drunken*. Archaic as participle.

309 f. These strange commotions in Nature portend the re-animation of the lifeless bodies.

314. *fire-flags*. Poetical and archaic for *lightning*.—*sheen*. See line 56, note.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
 And the sails did sigh like sedge;
 320 And the rain poured down from one black
 cloud;

The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
 The Moon was at its side:
 Like waters shot from some high crag,
 325 The lightning fell with never a jag,
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies
 of the ship's
 crew are in-
 spired and
 the ship
 moves on.

The loud wind never reached the ship,
 Yet now the ship moved on!
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon
 330 The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
 It had been strange, even in a dream,
 To have seen those dead men rise.

335 The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
 Yet never a breeze up blew;
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
 Where they were wont to do;
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
 340 We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
 Stood by me knee to knee:

318-326. c.f. the peaceful scene of 367 f.

321. **The Moon**, etc. Note the effective contrast.

322. **The thick**, etc. Comment on the verbal harmony of this line.

324-326. Discuss these lines as to meaning and form.

339-344. Note the intensity of the realism.

The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."—

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"

"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,

Which to their corpses came again,

But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their ³⁵⁰
arms,

And clustered round the mast;

Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,

And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,

Then darted to the Sun;

Slowly the sounds came back again, ³⁵⁵

Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky

I heard the sky-lark sing;

Sometimes all little birds that are, ³⁶⁰

How they seemed to fill the sea and air

With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments,

Now like a lonely flute;

And now it is an angel's song, ³⁶⁵

That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on

A pleasant noise till noon,

345 But not by
the souls of
the men, nor
by daemons
of earth or
middle air,
but by a
blessed
troop of an-
gelic spirits,
sent down
by the in-
vocation of
the guard-
ian saint.

362. jargoning. Old French *jargon*, the singing of birds.

367-372. These lines, with their gentle melody, reveal Coleridge's power over the musical resources of our language. The words themselves have the murmuring flow of a hidden

A noise like of a hidden brook
 370 In the leafy month of June,
 That to the sleeping woods all night
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
 Yet never a breeze did breathe:
 375 Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
 Moved onward from beneath.

The lone-
 some spirit
 from the
 south pole
 carries on
 the ship as
 far as the
 Line, in
 obedience to
 the angelic
 troop, but
 still requireth
 vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
 From the land of mist and snow,
 The spirit slid: and it was he
 380 That made the ship to go.
 The sails at noon left off their tune,
 And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
 Had fixed her to the ocean:
 385 But in a minute she 'gan stir,
 With a short uneasy motion—
 Backwards and forwards half her length
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
 390 She made a sudden bound;
 It flung the blood into my head,
 And I fell down in a swoond.

The Polar
 Spirit's fel-
 low-dæmons,
 the invisible
 inhabitants

How long in that same fit I lay,
 I have not to declare;
 395 But ere my living life returned,

brook. The peacefulness and continuity of the ship's motion could not be more felicitously described.

382. The South Polar Spirit can go no further.

394. I have not, etc. = I have not power to.

395. living life. In contrast with his former Life in Death.

I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel blow he laid full low,
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

400

405

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?'

410

SECOND VOICE

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

415

397. **Two voices.** These voices probably represent Justice and Mercy. Justify this statement.

407. **honey-dew.** Drops of sugary substance found on the leaves and stems of plants.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

If he may know which way to go;
 For she guides him smooth or grim.
 420 See, brother, see! how graciously
 She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE

The Mariner
 hath been
 cast into a
 trance; for
 the angelic
 power caus-
 eth the ves-
 sel to drive
 northward
 faster than
 human life 425
 could en-
 dure.

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
 Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE

'The air is cut away before,
 435 And closes from behind.
 - Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
 Or we shall be belated:
 For slow and slow that ship will go,
 When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The Super- 430
 natural
 motion is
 retarded;
 the Mariner
 awakes, and
 his penance
 begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
 As in a gentle weather:
 'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high,
 The dead men stood together.
 All stood together on the deck,
 435 For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
 All fixed on me their stony eyes,
 That in the Moon did glitter.
 The pang, the curse, with which they died,
 Had never passed away:
 440 I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
 Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse
 is finally
 expiated.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
 I viewed the ocean green,

And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen— 448

Lik 3 that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed safely too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree? 465

And the
ancient
Mariner
beholdeth
his native
country.

452. But soon, etc. Compare this with the wind described in lines 309 f.

457. Like a meadow-gale of spring. A sea-image redolent of the land and memories of home. Write a note on the descriptions of Nature in this poem.

458. It mingled strangely, etc. The Mariner is not quite sure whether to dread this wind or not. He remembers his former experience.

464 f. Compare lines 21 f. The evolution of the poem is completed.

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
 And I with sobs did pray—
 470 O let me be awake, my God !
 Or let me sleep away.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
 So smoothly it was strewn !
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,
 475 And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
 That stands above the rock :
 The moonlight steeped in silentness
 The steady weathercock.

480 And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colors came.

The angelic
 spirits leave
 the dead
 bodies,

And appear
 in their own
 forms of
 light.

A little distance from the prow
 485 Those crimson shadows were :
 I turned my eyes upon the deck—
 Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
 And, by the holy rood !

490 A man all light, a seraph-man,
 On every corse there stood.

478. **steeped in silentness.** The peacefulness of this scene, in marked contrast with the unrest which had gone before, is reiterated in the next line of this stanza, and in the stanza which follows, e.g., line 479, **The steady weathercock**, and line 480, **with silent light**.

482, 483.

that shadows were
 In crimson colors.

Note the forcible antithesis. Point out other examples of verbal antithesis in *The Ancient Mariner*, and of color contrasts in general.

489. **And, by the holy rood !** A ballad oath. **rood** = *cross*.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
 It was a heavenly sight !
 They stood as signals to the land,
 Each one a lovely light ;

498

This seraph-band, each waved his hand ;
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
 Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
 My head was turned perforce away,
 And I saw a boat appear.

500

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
 I heard them coming fast :
 Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

502

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
 It is the Hermit good !
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
 That he makes in the wood.
 He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

506

PART VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea.

The Hermit
 of the
 515 Wood.

502. **My head**, etc. The angelic power constrained him.

512. **shrive**. An obsolete form of *shrive*.

Part VII. The transition is made to normal conditions.

514. **This Hermit good** It is especially appropriate that the Mariner's sin should be absolved by one enveloped in such sanctity. The student should indicate by reference to the text the character which Coleridge intended to bestow upon the Hermit.

How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
 He loves to talk with marineres
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
 520 He hath a cushion plump :
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
 ' Why this is strange, I trow !
 535 Where are those lights so many and fair,
 That signal made but now ? '

Approacheth
 the ship with
 wonder.

' Strange, by my faith ! ' the Hermit said—
 ' And they answered not our cheer '
 The planks look warped ! and see those sails
 530 How thin they are and sere !
 I never saw aught like to them,
 Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
 My forest brook along ;
 535 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below
 That eats the she-wolf's young. '

519-522. Develop the ironical force of this stanza.

525. **Where are**, etc. Cf. lines 494, 495.

530. **How thin**, etc. Cf. line 312.

532. Observe the *enjambement* or run-on line from one stanza to the next.

533. **Brown skeletons**, etc. Show how this simile is especially natural here. How do lines 535-537 affect the simile ?

535. **Ivy-tod**. A thick bush, usually of ivy.

537. **That eats**. What is the antecedent of "that" ?

' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—

(The Pilot made reply)

I am a-feared'—' Push on, push on !'

540

Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,

But I nor spake nor stirred ;

The boat came close beneath the ship,

And straight a sound was heard.

545

Under the water it rumbled on,

Still louder and more dread :

It reached the ship, it split the bay ;

The ship went down like lead.

The ship
suddenly
sinketh.

Stunned by the loud and dreadful sound,

550 The ancient
Mariner is
saved in the
Pilot's boat.

Which sky and ocean smote,

Like one that hath been seven days drowned

My body lay afloat ;

But swift as dreams, myself I found

Within the Pilot's boat.

555

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,

The boat spun round and round ;

And all was still, save that the hill

Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked

560

And fell down in a fit ;

540. **a-feared.** Distinguish carefully by derivations *a-feared* and *afraid*.

549. **The ship went down like lead.** This line is a striking example at once of the simplicity and economy of Coleridge's diction. A reference to the introduction will show that the original vice of his style was turgidity and diffuseness. Was Coleridge justified in thus getting rid of his ship ?

558, 559. **And all was still, etc.** This is a Wordsworthian touch. Examine the passages in this poem which describe sound. Do they argue delicacy of perception ?

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
565 Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
' Ha, ha ! ' quoth he, ' full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

570 And now, all in my own cuntry,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner
earnestly
entreateth
the Hermit
to shrieve
him ; and the
penance of
life falls on
him.

' O, shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man ! '
575 The Hermit crossed his brow.
' Say quick,' quoth he, ' I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ? '

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
580 Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

And ever
and anon
throughout
his future
life an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
land.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns ;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
585 This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;

564-567. *I took the oars*, etc. We have here one of the many inimitable touches in the poem. The quiet unobtrusive line, which tells of the Pilot's boy "who now doth crazy go," reveals with startling force the terrifying aspect of the Mariner.

586. Discuss the simile.

That moment that his face I see,
 I know the man that must hear me :
 To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
 The Wedding-Guests are there :
 But in the garden-bower the bride
 And bride-maids singing are :
 And hark the little vesper bell, 595
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
 Alone on a wide wide sea :
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemèd there to be. 600

O, sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk, 605
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,

591. **What loud uproar**, etc. Walter Pater observed that the unity of *The Ancient Mariner* was "secured in part by the skill with which the incidents of the marriage feast are made to break in dreamily from time to time upon the main story." Can you assign any further significance to the recurrence of these sounds of marriage festival?

595, 596. **And hark**, etc. What do these lines indicate with reference to *The Ancient Mariner*?

597-600. **O Wedding Guest!** etc. Develop the significance of these lines.

601-617. **O sweeter**, etc. On the basis of these lines, and by reference to the poem as a whole, comment upon the *human* character of the ancient Mariner himself. Keep in mind Wordsworth's opinion, in his comments on this poem, to the effect that the Mariner possesses no definite character, whether in his human or nautical capacity.

Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to
teach by his
own example
love and rev-
erence to all
things that
God made
and loveth.

610 Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
615 All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
620 Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
625 He rose the morrow morn.

1797-1798

623. **forlorn.** *Deprived.* Archaic in this sense.

624. **sadder.** What is the force of this word here?

WORDSWORTH

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cockermouth, Cumberland, on April 7th, 1770. His father, John Wordsworth, was the agent of Sir J. Lowther, who later became the first Earl of Lonsdale. At the age of eight the boy was sent to school at Hawkshead. The impressions of his boyhood period are related in the autobiographical poem, *The Prelude* (written 1805, published 1850), and from this poetical record we discern how strong the influences of Nature were to shape and develop his imagination. Wordsworth's father died in 1783, leaving the family poorly provided for. The main asset was a considerable claim upon the Earl of Lonsdale, which that individual refused to pay. On his death, in 1802, the successor to the title and estates paid the amount of the claim in full with accumulated interest. In the interval, however, the Wordsworth family remained in very straitened circumstances. Enough money was provided by Wordsworth's guardians to send him to Cambridge University in 1787. He entered St. John's College, and after an undistinguished course graduated without honours in January, 1791. His vacations were spent chiefly in Hawkshead and Wales, but one memorable vacation was marked by a walking excursion with a friend through France and Switzerland, the former country then being on the verge of revolution.

Shortly after leaving the University, in November, 1791, Wordsworth returned to France, remaining there until December of the following year. During

this period he was completely won over to the principles of the Revolution. The later reaction from these principles constituted the one moral struggle of his life.

In 1793 his first work appeared before the public—two poems, entitled *The Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. Coleridge, who read these pieces at Cambridge, divined that they announced the emergence of an original poetical genius above the horizon. Readers of the poems to-day, who are wise after the event, could scarcely divine as much. At about this period Wordsworth received a bequest of £900 from Raisley Calvert, which enabled him and his sister Dorothy to take a small cottage at Racedown in Dorsetshire. Here he wrote a number of poems in which he worked off the ferment of his revolutionary ideas. These ideas can scarcely be said to have troubled him much in later years.

An important incident in his life, hardly second in importance to the stimulating companionship of his sister, was his meeting with Coleridge, which occurred probably towards the close of 1795. Coleridge, who was but little younger than Wordsworth, had the more richly equipped, if not the more richly endowed, mind. He was living at Nether Stowey, and in order to benefit by the stimulus which such a friendship offered, the Wordsworths moved to Alfoxden, three miles away from Stowey (July, 1797). It was during a walking expedition to the Quantock Hills in November of that year that the poem of the *Ancient Mariner* was planned. It was intended that the poem should be a joint production, but Wordsworth's contribution was confined to the suggestion of a few details merely, and some scattered lines which are indicated in the notes to that poem. Their poetic theories were soon to take definite shape in the publication of the famous *Lyrical Ballads* (September, 1798), to which Coleridge contri-

buted the *Ancient Mariner*, and Wordsworth some characteristic lyrical, reflective and narrative poems. The excessive simplicity and alleged triviality of some of these poems long continued to give offence to the conservative lovers of poetry. Even to-day we feel that Wordsworth was sometimes the victim of his own theories.

In June of this same year (1798) Wordsworth and his sister accompanied Coleridge to Germany. They soon parted company, the Wordsworths settling at Goslar, while Coleridge, intent upon study, went in search of German metaphysics at Göttingen. Wordsworth did not come into any contact with German life or thought, but sat through the winter by a stove writing poems for a second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. April, 1799, found the brother and sister again in England. In December they settled down at Dove Cottage, Town End, Grasmere, and never, save for brief intervals, abandoned the Lake Country. In 1802, as has been said, a slight accession of fortune fell to Wordsworth by the settlement of the Lonsdale claim. The share of each of the family was £1,800. On the strength of this wind-fall the poet felt that he might marry, and accordingly brought home Mary Hutchinson as his wife.

The subsequent career of Wordsworth belongs to the history of poetry. Of events in the ordinary sense there are few to record. He successively occupies three houses in the Lake Country after abandoning Dove Cottage. We find him at Allan Bank in 1808, in the Parsonage at Grasmere in 1810, and at Rydal Mount from 1813 to his death in 1850. He makes occasional excursions to Scotland or the Continent, and at long intervals visits London, where Carlyle sees him and records his vivid impressions. For many years Wordsworth enjoys the sinecure of Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland

(£400 a year), and on his resignation of that office in his son's favour, he is placed on the Civil List for a well-deserved pension of £300. On Southey's death, in 1843, he is appointed Poet Laureate. He died in 1850 at the age of eighty.

Wordsworth's principal long poems are :

The Prelude (1805, published 1850).

The Excursion (1814).

The White Doe of Rylstone (1815).

Peter Bell The Waggoner (1819).

His fame rests principally on his shorter narrative poems, his meditative lyrics, including his two great odes, *To Duty* and *On the Intimations of Immortality*, and on the sonnets, which rank with the finest in the language. The longer poems have many fine passages exhibiting his powers of graphic description, and illustrating his mystical philosophy of nature.

WORDSWORTH

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud ; it has sung for three
years *

Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail ;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colors have all passed away from her eyes.

Note the extreme simplicity of the diction in this poem.

1. **Wood Street.** Runs north from Cheapside, London. The tree, on which Wordsworth heard the thrush, is still standing, but its destruction is threatened.

When daylight appears. Suggests the poverty of the woman.

7. **Lothbury.** A street behind the Bank of England.

8. **Cheapside.** M.E. *cheap* means *trade*.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

“Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?”

“Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

“You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!”

One morning thus by Esthwaite Lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me, good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

“The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

1. **William.** This is, of course, the poet himself.

13. **Esthwaite Lake.** A very small lake west of Windermere and south of the village of Hawkshead, where Wordsworth went to school.

15. **Matthew.** Some connection has been assumed between the character of Matthew and William Taylor, the schoolmaster at Hawkshead. Wordsworth writes as follows in the “Advertisement” to the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): “The lines entitled *Expostulation and Reply*, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.” This would identify Matthew in all probability with Coleridge or Sir James Mackintosh. The character is at the most composite.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum 25
Of things forever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may, 30
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head, 5
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 't is a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet, 10
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

30. **Conversing as I may.** Holding converse or communion with nature and with his own quiet soul.

THE TABLES TURNED. This poem is the complement of the preceding.

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !
 He, too, is no mean preacher:
 Come forth into the light of things, 15
 Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
 Our minds and hearts to bless—
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness. 20

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; 25
 Our meddling intellect
 Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
 We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
 Close up those barren leaves; 30
 Come forth, and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.

TO MY SISTER

It is the first mild day of March:
 Each minute sweeter than before,
 The redbreast sings from the tall larch
 That stands beside our door.

21-24. Compare *To My Sister*, l. 25.32.

25-32. Wordsworth must have felt the exaggeration of these lines which seem to prejudice the value of science and art. The two poems are so antagonistic in their cast that the poet seeks to enforce the contrast of the two attitudes of thought with all the vigor he can command. The student should be careful to discriminate accurately between the two points of view which these companion poems afford.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister ! ('t is a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

13. **Edward.** The son of Basil Montagu. He was the bearer of the poem to Wordsworth's sister.

25-32. Compare *The Tables Turned*, l. 21-24.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,

We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

33

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
—And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

40

NUTTING

———It seems a day

(I speak of one from many singled out),
One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand, and turned my steps
Toward some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds,
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame,—
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, and, in truth,

5

10

5. **our cottage threshold.** "The house at which I was boarded during the time I was at school." (Wordsworth's note, 1800). The school was the Hawkshead School.

9. **Tricked out** = *dressed*. The verb "to trick" = "to dress" is derived probably from the noun, "trick" in the sense of 'a dexterous artifice, 'a touch.' See "Century Dictionary."

cast-off weeds = *cast-off clothes*. Wordsworth originally wrote 'of Beggar's weeds.' What prompted him to change the expression?

10. **for that service.** i.e., for nutting.

12-13. **of power to smile At thorns** = *able to defy*, etc. Not because of their strength, but because so ragged that additional rents were of small account.

More ragged than need was ! O'er pathless rocks,
 Through beds of matted fern and tangled thickets, 15
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
 Of devastation; but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung, 20
 A virgin scene ! A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart
 As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet; or beneath the trees I sate 25
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
 A temper known to those, who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blest
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves 30
 The violets of five seasons reappear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye;
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
 Forever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And, with my cheek on one of those green stones 35
 That, fleeced with moss, under the shady trees,
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep,
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,

21. **virgin** = *unmarred, undevastated*.

31. Explain the line. Notice the poetical way in which the poet conveys the idea of solitude, (l. 30-32).

33. **fairy water-breaks** = *wavelets, ripples*. Cf.:-

Many a silvery *water-break*
 Above the golden gravel.

Tennyson, *The Brook*.

36. **fleeced with moss**. Suggest a reason why the term "fleeced" has peculiar appropriateness here.

In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
 Tribute to ease; and of its joy secure, 40
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with
 crash
 And merciless ravage: and the shady nook 45
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being: and unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the past,
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand 55
 Touch,—for there is a spirit in the woods.

39-40. Paraphrase these lines to bring out their meaning.

43-48. **Then up I rose.** Contrast this active exuberant pleasure not unmixed with pain with the passive meditative joy that the preceding lines express.

47-48. **patiently gave up Their quiet being.** Notice the attribution of life to inanimate nature. Wordsworth constantly held that there was a mind and all the attributes of mind in nature. Cf. l. 56, "for there is a spirit in the woods."

53. **and saw the intruding sky.** Bring out the force of this passage.

54. **Then, dearest Maiden.** This is a reference to the poet's sister, Dorothy Wordsworth.

56. **for there is a spirit in the woods.** Cf. *Tintern Abbey*, 101 f.

A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe !
 Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
 And giv'st to forms and images a breath
 And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
 By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human soul;
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man:
 But with high objects, with enduring things,
 With life and nature: purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying by such discipline
 Both pain and fear,—until we recognize
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
 With stinted kindness. In November days,
 When vapors rolling down the valleys made
 A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
 At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,

1-14. In what other poems does Wordsworth describe "the education of nature?"

8. Nature's teaching is never sordid nor mercenary, but always purifying and ennobling.

10. **purifying**, also **sanctifying** (l. 12), refer to "Soul" (l. 2).

12-14. Human cares are lightened in proportion to our power of sympathising with nature. The very beatings of our heart acquire a certain grandeur from the fact that they are a process of nature and linked thus to the general life of things. It is possible that "beatings of the heart" may figuratively represent the mere play of the emotions, and thus have a bearing upon the words "pain and fear" in line 13.

15. **fellowship**. Communion with nature in her varying aspects as described in the following lines.

When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 20
 Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
 In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
 Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
 And by the waters, all the summer long.
 And in the frosty season, when the sun 25
 Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
 The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
 I heeded not the summons : happy time
 It was indeed for all of us ; for me
 It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud 30
 The village clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
 Proud and exulting like an untired horse,
 That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
 We hissed along the polished ice, in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase 35
 And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
 The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle ; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ; 40
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron ; while far-distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,

31. **village clock.** The village was Hawkshead.

35. **Confederate.** Qualifies "we," or "games." Point out the different shades of meaning for each agreement.

42. **Tinkled like iron.** "When very many are skating together, the sounds and the noises give an impulse to the icy trees, and the woods all round the lake *tinkle*." S. T. Coleridge in *The Friend*, ii, 325 (1818).

42-44. The keenness of Wordsworth's sense perceptions was very remarkable. His susceptibility to impressions of sound is well illustrated in this passage, which closes (l. 43-46) with a color picture of striking beauty and appropriateness.

Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west 48
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star ; 50
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain ; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still 55
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short, yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round ! 60
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

50. **reflex** = *reflection*. Cf.:

Like the *reflex* of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves.

Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, iii, 4.

In later editions Wordsworth altered these lines as follows :

To cut across the image. 1809.
To cross the bright reflection. 1820.

54-60. The effect of rapid motion is admirably described. The spinning effect which Wordsworth evidently has in mind we have all noticed in the fields which seem to revolve when viewed from a swiftly moving train. However, a skater from the low level of a stream would see only the fringe of trees sweep past him. The darkness and the height of the banks would not permit him to see the relatively motionless objects in the distance on either hand.

57-58. This method of stopping short upon one's heels might prove disastrous.

58-60. The effect of motion persists after the motion has ceased.

62-63. The apparent motion of the cliffs grows feebler by degrees until "all was tranquil as a summer sea." In *The*

'THREE YEARS SHE GREW'

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown !

This Child I to myself will take ;
 She shall be mine, and I will make
 A Lady of my own.

5

'Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse ; and with me
 The Girl, in rock and plain,
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain.

10

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
 That wild with glee across the lawn
 Or up the mountain springs ;
 And hers shall be the breathing balm,
 And hers the silence and the calm
 Of mute insensate things.

15

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
 To her ; for her the willow bend ;
 Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the storm

20

Prelude, 1809, Wordsworth substituted "Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep." Suggest a reason for this, and criticise the change.

16. **breathing balm.** The fragrance which exhales from trees or shrubs, or the healing power which resides in their odorous breath. "Balm" is originally the oily substance exuded from resinous trees, and by extension of meaning the aromatic odor and healing power of the exudation.

20-24. **for her the willow bend,** etc. The willow will mould her form to symmetry, and even the sweeping cloud-lines of approaching storms will communicate their grace to her.

Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live 35
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face. 5

2. **Green-head Ghyll.** Near Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home at Grasmere.

Ghyll. A short, steep, and narrow valley with a stream running through it.

But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen ; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones,
And to that simple object appertains
A story,—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved :—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills 25
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35

17. In Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal for October 11, 1800, we read : " After dinner we walked up Greenhead Gill in search of a sheepfold. . . . The sheepfold is falling away. It is built in the form of a heart unequally divided.

For the delight of a few natural hearts ;
 And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
 And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone ; and oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the South 50
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me !" 55
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives

48. **the meaning of all winds.** This is not a figurative statement. Michael knows by experience whether the sound and direction of the wind forebode storm or fair weather,—precisely the practical kind of knowledge which a herdsman should possess.

51. **subterraneous.** The meaning of this word has given rise to discussion. "Subterraneous" cannot here be literally employed, unless it refer to the sound of the wind in hollow places, and beneath overhanging crags.

51-52. **like the noise, etc.** Is there a special appropriateness in the use of a Scottish simile? What is the general character of the similes throughout the poem?

56-77. Wordsworth never attributes to Michael the subtler and more philosophical sensations which he himself derived from nature. Such poems as *The Prelude* or *The Excursion* contain many elevated passages on the influence of nature, which would have been exceedingly inappropriate here.

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains : he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights. 60
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed 65
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory 70
Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain ;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less?—had
laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him 75
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years. 80
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work. 85
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began

To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then
 Their labor did not cease ; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the
 meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ 105
 Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;
 An aged utensil, which had performed 115
 Service beyond others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn,—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,

115. Scan this line.

And left the couple neither gay perhaps 120
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
 Father and Son, while far into the night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighborhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
 And westward to the village near the lake ; 135
 And from this constant light, so regular,
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named the EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
 Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart

121. **Nor cheerful.** The epithet seems not well chosen in view of the fact that all the circumstances of their life breathe a spirit of quiet cheerfulness. Surely the light (129-131) is a symbol of cheer.

126. **peculiar work.** Bring out the force of the epithet.

134. **Easedale.** Near Grasmere. **Dunmail-Raise.** The pass leading from Grasmere to Keswick. **Raise.** A provincial word meaning "an ascent."

139. **the Evening Star.** This name was actually given to a neighboring house.

This son of his old age was yet more dear —
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all — 143
 Than that a child, more than all other gift,
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
 Exceeding was the love he bore to him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
 Of fathers, but with grief and enforced
 To acts of tenderness, and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on man's attire, did Michael love, 160
 Albeit of a stern, unbending mind,
 To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
 Troughed in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
 Sat with his herded sheep before him stretched
 Under a large old oak, that near his door 165
 Stood alone, and from matchless depth of shade
 Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
 Silence in our rustic dialect was called

143-152. The love of Michael for Luke is inwrought with his love for his home and for the land which surrounds it. These he desired at his death to hand down unencumbered to his son. "I have attempted," Wordsworth wrote to Poole, "to give a picture of a strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart—the parental affection and the love of property, *landed* property, including the feelings of inheritance, home and personal and family independence."

145. Scan this line.

The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts 175
 Scared them while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
 And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipped
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed 185
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
 And, to his office prematurely called,
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help;
 And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
 Though naught was left undone which staff, or voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
 Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights, 195
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his Father daily went, and they
 Were as companions, why should I relate

169. **The Clipping Tree.** Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing. (Wordsworth's note, 1800).

182. Notice the entire absence of pause at the end of the line. Point out other instances of run-on lines (*enjambement*).

That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 200
Feelings and emanations,—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year, 205
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him ; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture, 215
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again, 225
And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
" I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours 230
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think

That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;
 And I have lived to be a fool at last 235
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but 240
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

“ When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ; 245
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
 Another kinsman ; he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade ; and Luke to him shall go, 250
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done ? Where every one is poor,
 What can be gained ? ”

At this the old Man paused, 255
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
 He was a parish-boy,—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence, 260
 And half-pennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares ;

259. parish-boy. Depending on charity.

And, with his basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there,
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy 265
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,
 And left estates and moneys to the poor,
 And at his birthplace built a chapel, floored
 With marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 270
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel
 And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed: " Well, Isabel, this scheme,
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me. 275
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
 Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 280
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long 285
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came

268-270. Wordsworth added the following note on these lines :
 "The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ing's Chapel ; and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside."

271. *and to the fields went forth.* Observe the inconsistency. The conversation took place in the evening. See l. 227.

281. *With a light heart.* Michael's growing misgivings are subtly represented in the following lines, and the renewal of his hopes.

To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights 290
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go: 295
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared 305
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which requests were added, that forthwith 310
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel 315
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330
And thus the old man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me; with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth
And all thy life hast been my daily joy. 335
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340
To newborn infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds 345
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed, 350
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou 355

Lack any pleasure which a boy can 'now."
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
 And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
 That these are things of which I need not speak. 360
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father; and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hands; for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still 365
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together; here they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and, when
 At length their time was come, they were not loath
 To give their bodies to the family mould. 370
 I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived;
 But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
 And see so little gain from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came to me;
 Till I was forty years of age, not more 375
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till the three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 380
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou shouldst go."

At this the old Man paused;
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:

367-368. These lines forcibly show how tenaciously Michael's feelings were rooted in the soil of his home. Hence the extreme pathos of the situation.

"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone,—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope; we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee;
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes; it should be so—yes, yes,—
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke; thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone
 What will be left to us!—But I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
 A work which is not here: a covenant
 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate

388. Observe the dramatic force of this line.

393-396. What unconscious poetry there is in the old man's words!

Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight 420
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy 425
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen." 435
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on; and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour 440
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame 445

Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart: 430
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks 435
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time 460
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went, 465
And never lifted up a single stone.

There by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time 470

466. Matthew Arnold commenting on this line says: "The right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and most characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from Michael: 'And never lifted up a single stone.' There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style strictly so called, at all; yet it is an expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind."

467 f. Note the noble simplicity and pathos of these closing lines. There is a reserved force of pent-up pathos here, which without effort reaches the height of dramatic effectiveness.

He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband; at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand. 475
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
 Is gone,—the ploughshare has been through the
 ground
 On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left,
 That grew beside their door; and the remains 480
 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

TO THE DAISY

Bright Flower ! whose home is everywhere,
 Bold in maternal Nature's care,
 And all the long year through the heir
 Of joy and sorrow,
 Methinks that there abides in thee 8
 Some concord with humanity,
 Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough !
 Is it that Man is soon deprest ?
 A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest, 10
 Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
 And Thou would'st teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,

8. *thorough*. This is by derivation the correct form of the modern word "through." A.S. *thurh*, M.E. *thuruh*. The use of "thorough" is now purely adjectival, except in archaic or poetic speech.

A hope for times that are unkind,
And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

24. **apostolical.** The stanza in which this word occurs was omitted in 1827 and 1832, because the expression was censured as almost profane. Wordsworth in his dictated note to Miss Fenwick has the following: "The word [apostolical] is adopted with reference to its derivation, implying something sent out on a mission; and assuredly this little flower, especially when the subject of verse, may be regarded, in its humble degree, as administering both to moral and spiritual purposes."

1. **O blithe New-comer.** The Cuckoo is migratory, and appears in England in the early spring. Compare *Solitary Reaper*, l. 16.

I have heard. i. e., in my youth.

3. **shall I call thee Bird?** Compare Shelley.
Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert.

To a Skylark.

4. **a wandering Voice?** Lacking substantial existence.

While I am lying on the grass,
 Thy twofold shout I hear;
 From hill to hill it seems to pass,
 At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale
 Of sunshine and of flowers,
 Thou bringest unto me a tale
 Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
 Even yet thou art to me
 No bird, but an invisible thing,
 A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
 I listened to; that Cry
 Which made me look a thousand ways
 In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
 Through woods and on the green;
 And thou wert still a hope, a love;
 Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
 Can lie upon the plain
 And listen, till I do beget
 That golden time again.

6. **twofold shout.** Twofold, because consisting of a double note. Compare Wordsworth's sonnet, *To the Cuckoo*, l. 4:
 "With its twin notes inseparably paired."

Wordsworth employs the word "shout" in several of his Cuckoo descriptions. See *The Excursion*, ii. l. 346-348 and vii. l. 408; also the following from *Yes! it was the Mountain Echo*:

Yes! it was the mountain echo,
 Solitary, clear, profound,
 Answering to the shouting Cuckoo;
 Giving to her sound for sound.

O blessed Bird ! the earth we pace
 Again appears to be
 An unsubstantial, faery place;
 That is fit home for Thee !

THE GREEN LINNET

Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed
 Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
 With brightest sunshine round me spread
 Of spring's unclouded weather,
 In this sequestered nook how sweet
 To sit upon my orchard-seat !
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
 In all this covert of the blest:
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion !
 Thou, Linnæ ! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May;
 And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
 Make all one band of paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment:
 A Life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too blest with any one to pair;
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel-trees, 28
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings 30
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
 A Brother of the dancing leaves,
 Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves 34
 Pours forth his song in gushes;
 As if by that exulting strain
 He mocked and treated with disdain
 The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
 While fluttering in the bushes. 40

‘SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT’

She was a Phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon my sight;
 A lovely Apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; 5
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the cheerful Dawn—
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and waylay. 10

This poem describes the poet's feeling for his wife. For other references to her, compare *The Prelude*, vi, l. 224 f. and xiv, l. 268 f.

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet 15
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

 And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveller between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light. 30

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass !
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass !
 Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
 And sings a melancholy strain;

22. **pulse of the machine.** The use of the word "machine" has been much criticized. Explain and comment upon the meaning.

6. **a melancholy strain.** This poem was suggested by a MS. "Tour in Scotland," written by a friend, Wilkinson.

O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands 10
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas 15
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago; 20
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

10. The first reading (1807) was "So sweetly to reposing birds."

14. **the Cuckoo-bird.** Wordsworth's references to the Cuckoo are very numerous. In his *Guide to the Lakes* he speaks of "an imaginative influence in the voice of the Cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley." Here we have, instead, the voice referred to as

15. **Breaking the silence of the seas**, which even more exquisitely conveys the poetic charm of solitude. Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" doubtless suggested this line:—

And we did speak only to break

The silence of the sea. (Part ii, stanza 6.)

The literary quality of these stanzas is of the highest.

19. **For old, unhappy, far-off things.** Compare Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* for the day which includes this poem: "William here conceived the notion of writing an ode upon the affecting subject of those relics of human society found in that grand and solitary region."

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
 As if her song could have no ending;
 I saw her singing at her work,
 And o'er the sickle bending;—
 I listened, motionless and still;
 And, as I mounted up the hill,
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more.

25

30

ODE TO DUTY

"*Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim.*"

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God !
 O Duty ! if that name thou love,
 Who are a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Thou, who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !
 There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them; who, in love and truth,
 Where no misgiving is, rely

5

10

29. The editions of 1807 and 1815 read as follows :
 I listened till I had my fill.
 Is the change an improvement ?

Jam non consilio, etc. "No longer good by resolve, but induced thereto by habit, so that I am able not only to do right, but I am not able to do anything save what is right." Wordsworth inserted this motto in the edition of 1837.

9. **There are who.** There are some who. Compare the Latin construction, *sunt qui*.

Upon the genial sense of youth:
 Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot;
 Who do thy work, and know it not:
 Oh ! if through confidence misplaced 15
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around
 them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security. 20
 And they a blissful course may hold
 Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
 Live in the spirit of this creed;
 Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom and untried; 25
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust:
 And oft, when in my heart was heard
 Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
 The task, in smoother walks to stray;
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,
 I supplicate for thy control; 35
 But in the quietness of thought:
 Me this unchartered freedom tires;
 I feel the weight of chance desires:
 My hopes no more must change their name,
 I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

33 f. The punctuation offers some difficulty in this stanza.

37. **unchartered.** Unrestricted, a freedom not limited by charter.

Stern lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face:
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds, 45
 And fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
 And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
 fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
 I call thee: I myself commend 50
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 O, let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice;
 The confidence of reason give; 55
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM,
 PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I was thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile !
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
 I saw thee every day; and all the while
 Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

56. thy Bondman. Compare l. 32.

Paraphrase the poem verse by verse to elucidate the meaning.

Peele Castle. In Lancashire, south of Barrow-in-Furness.

2. **Four summer weeks.** In 1794 Wordsworth spent part of a summer vacation at the house of his cousin, Mr. Barker, at Rampside, a village near Peele Castle.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air !
 So like, so very like, was day to day !
 Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm ! it seemed no sleep;
 No mood, which season takes away, or brings:
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah ! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
 To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
 The light that never was, on sea or land,
 The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,
 Amid a world how different from this !
 Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
 On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

6-7. Shelley has twice imitated these lines. Compare:—

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled Image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away.

Ode to Liberty, vi.

also the following :

Within the surface of the fleeting river
 The wrinkled image of the city lay,
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it never fades away.

Evening.

9-10. The calm was so complete that it did not seem a transient mood of the sea, a passing sleep.

13-16. Compare with the above original reading of 1807 (restored after 1827) the lines which Wordsworth substituted in 1820 and 1827.

Ah ! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
 To express what then I saw ; and add a gleam,
 The lustre, known to neither sea nor land,
 But borrowed from the youthful Poet's dream.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
 Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
 Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
 The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease, 25
 Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
 No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
 Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
 Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30
 And seen the soul of truth in every part,
 A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
 I have submitted to a new control:
 A power is gone, which nothing can restore; 35
 A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
 A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the
 Friend,

If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
 This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
 This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and well, 45
 Well chosen is the spirit that is here;

35-36. **A power is gone—Soul.** The reference is to the death at sea of his brother Captain John Wordsworth. The poet can no longer see things wholly idealized. His brother's death has revealed to him, however, the ennobling virtue of grief. Thus a personal loss is converted into human gain. Note especially in this connection l. 35 and ll. 53-60.

That Hulk which labors in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind !
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied: for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

SEPTEMBER, 1819

The sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
Are hung, as if with golden shields,
Bright trophies of the sun !
Like a fair sister of the sky,
Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
The mountains looking on.

And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
Albeit uninspired by love,
By love untaught to ring,
May well afford to mortal ear

54. **from the Kind.** From our fellow-beings.

7. **vocal grove.** Filled with the music of birds.

5-6. *Cf. Byron in Isles of Greece:*

"The mountains look on Marathon
And Marathon looks on the sea."

8-9. The birds are not mating now.

An impulse more profoundly dear
Than music of the Spring.

For *that* from turbulence and heat
Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
In nature's struggling frame,
Some region of impatient life:
And jealousy, and quivering strife,
Therein a portion claim.

13

This, this is holy;—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

20

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all his creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

25

30

UPON THE SAME OCCASION

Departing summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

3

14. *seat*. Condition.

5. Note the fineness of perception in this line.

No faint and hesitating trill,
 Such tribute as to winter chill
 The lonely redbreast pays !
 Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
 From social warblers gathering in
 Their harvest of sweet lays.

20

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
 Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
 And yellow on the bough:—
 Fall, rosy garlands, from my head !
 Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
 Around a younger brow !

13

Yet will I temperately rejoice;
 Wide is the range, and free the choice
 Of undiscordant themes;
 Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
 Not less than vernal ecstasies,
 And passion's feverish dreams.

20

For deathless powers to verse belong,
 And they like Demi-gods are strong
 On whom the Muses smile;
 But some their function have disclaimed,
 Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
 To enervate and defile.

25

30

7. Is there an ellipsis here? or is the line appositional?

14-15. Compare Shakespeare's lines in *Macbeth*, v, 3:

"My way of life
 Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf."

27. **the Muses smile.** The Muses were nine in number, and were supposed to preside over poetry, music, dancing, and all the liberal arts.

30. Scan this line. Wordsworth refers scathingly to the corruption of modern poetry.

Not such the initiatory strains
 Committed to the silent plains
 In Britain's earliest dawn:
 Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
 While all-too-daringly the veil 35
 Of nature was withdrawn !

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
 When the live chords Alcæus smote,
 Inflamed by sense of wrong;
 Woe ! woe to Tyrants ! from the lyre 40
 Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
 Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
 By winged Love inscribed, to assuage
 The pangs of vain pursuit; 45
 Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
 With finest touch of passion swayed
 Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
 The wreck of Herculanean lore, 50

31-36. Wordsworth implies that the Druids were the earliest poets of Britain.

38. **Alcæus.** A lyric poet of Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos, about 600 B.C. He was a contemporary of Sappho (see l. 46), and the inventor of the alcaic verse.

46. **the Lesbian Maid.** Sappho, born in the island of Lesbos about 600 B.C. Her poetry was extremely emotional, and was highly esteemed by the ancients. But two or three fragments now remain. She is said to have hurled herself into the sea from Mount Leucas owing to unrequited love.

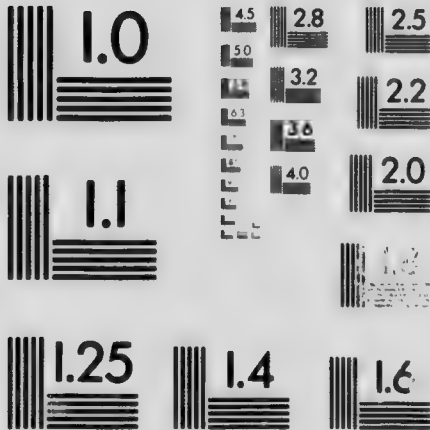
48. **Æolian lute.** Sappho's birth place, Lesbos, was in Æolia.

50. **Herculanean lore.** Herculaneum was engulfed with Pompeii in the famous eruption from Mt. Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The town was unearthed in 1709, about 24 feet underground, by workmen digging for a well. Many manuscripts were later discovered in the ruins.



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What rapture ! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poesy; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we enfold?
Can haughty Time be just?

55

60

TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH

(WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER
POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820).

The minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

5

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:

52. **Some Theban fragment.** The reference is to Pindar, the famous Theban poet. His "Olympic Odes" were his most famous production. He died about 435 B.C.

54. **Simonides.** A celebrated poet of Ceos. Some fragments of his poetry are extant. He died about 500 B.C.

55-60. Such discoveries would bring us a wealth of genuine poetry. Will Time ever be good enough to restore to us what Horace and Vergil (Maro) loved?

58. **Horace.** A famous Roman poet, the author of Odes, Satires, and Epistles. He died in 8 B.C.

59. **Maro.** Vergil's full name was Publius Vergilius Maro. He died in 19 B.C.

Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
 Nor check, the music of the strings; 10
 So stout and hardy were the band
 That scraped the chords with strenuous hand:

And who but listened?—till was paid
 Respect to every Inmate's claim:
 The greeting given, the music played, 15
 In honor of each household name,
 Duly pronounced with lusty call,
 And "Merry Christmas" wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
 That took thee from thy native hills; 20
 And it is given thee to rejoice:
 Though public care full often tills
 (Heaven only witness of the toil)
 A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine, 25
 Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
 And seen on other faces shine
 A true revival of the light
 Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
 In simple childhood, spread through ours! 30

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
 On these expected annual rounds;
 Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
 Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
 Or they are offered at the door 35
 That guards the lowliest of the poor.

15. **The greeting given, the music played.** Till the greeting had been given and the music played.

17. Attributive to "name" (l. 16.)

18. Explain the construction of "wished."

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
 Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
 To hear—and sink again to sleep !
 Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
 By blazing fire, the still suspense
 Of self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
 Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er;
 And some unbidden tears that rise
 For names once heard, and heard no more;
 Tears brightened by the serenade
 For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah ! not for emerald fields alone,
 With ambient streams more pure and bright
 Than fabled Cytherea's zone
 Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
 Is to my heart of hearts endeared
 The ground where we were born and reared !

Hail, ancient Manners ! sure defence,
 Where they survive, of wholesome laws ;
 Remnants of love whose modest sense
 Thus into narrow room withdraws;

50. *ambient = winding.*

51. *Cytherea's zone.* The goddess Venus was named Cytherea because she was supposed to have been born of the foam of the sea near Cythera, an island off the coast of the Peloponnesus. Venus was the goddess of love, and her power over the heart was strengthened by the marvellous zone or girdle she wore.

52. *the Thunderer.* The reference is to Jupiter, who is generally represented as seated upon a golden or ivory throne holding in one hand the thunderbolts, and in the other a sceptre of cypress.

55-60. Suggest how this stanza is characteristic of Wordsworth.

Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, Mountains old ! 60

Bear with me, Brother ! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth's venerable towers, 65
To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to fill
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments, to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays 70
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win 75
To agitations less severe,
That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
But fill the hollow vale with joy !

TO A SKYLARK

Ethereal minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?

65. **Lambeth's venerable towers.** Lambeth Palace, the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, is on the Thames. Wordsworth's brother Christopher, afterwards Master of Trinity College, was then (1820) Rector of Lambeth.

2. **despise the earth.** The derivative meaning of "despise," Lat. *despicere*, is "to look down upon." Compare Shelley's *To a Skylark*, st. xx.

"Thou scorner of the ground."

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
 Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine;
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
 Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
 True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home !

BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS

Fair Star of evening, Splendor of the west,
 Star of my Country !—on the horizon's brink
 Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
 On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest
 Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
 Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
 Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
 Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
 In thy fresh beauty. There ! that dusky spot
 Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
 Blessings be on you both ! one hope, one lot,
 One life, one glory !—I, with many a fear
 For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
 Among men who do not love her, linger here.

3-4. Compare Hogg's *Skylark*, l. 10-12.

"Where on thy dewy wing

Where art thou journeying ?

Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth."

6. **Those quivering wings**, etc. The construction is absolute.

8. Compare again Shelley's *Skylark*, st, viii:

"Like a poet hidden

In the light of thought."

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

SEPT. 3, 1802.

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

“WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY”

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country !—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child !

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF"

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
 Of British freedom, which to the open sea
 Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'
 Roused though it be full often to a mood 5
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
 That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
 Should perish, and to evil and to good
 Be lost forever. In our halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old: 10
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held.—In everything we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O Friend! I know not which way I must look
 For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,
 To think that now our life is only dressed
 For show; mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
 Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook 5
 In the open sunshine, or we are unblessed:
 The wealthiest man among us is the best:
 No grandeur now in nature or in book
 Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
 This is idolatry; and these we adore: 10

4. 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood.' This is quoted from Daniel's *Civil War*, Bk. ii, stanza 7.

Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea: 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

TO SLEEP

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,

And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth:
 So do not let me wear to-night away:
 Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?
 Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
 Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

BROOK ! WHOSE SOCIETY

Brook ! whose society the Poet seeks,
 Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
 And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
 Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
 And tracks thee dancing down thy waterbreaks;
 If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
 Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
 Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
 Channels for tears; no Naiad should'st thou be,—
 Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs: 10
 It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
 With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
 And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
 Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
 One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
 In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
 They were thy chosen music, Liberty !

ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND. Napoleon had in 1803 reduced Switzerland to a virtual dependency of France.

1-4. Two Voices are there—Liberty. Liberty has always found her strongholds among the mountains, or upon the open

There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
 Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
 Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
 For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
 That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal Saint with vain expense,
 With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
 Albeit laboring for a scanty band
 Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
 And glorious Work of fine intelligence!

-
5. **There came a Tyrant.** Napoleon I.
 6. **Thou.** sc. Liberty.
 7. **holds** = *strongholds*.
 8. The Alpine torrents murmur still, but Liberty has been driven away.
 9. England is still the home of Liberty.
 10. **high-souled Maid.** The poet addresses Liberty throughout the poem.
 11-14. Napoleon never abandoned the idea of invading England.
 15. **Tax** = *blame not*.
 16. **the royal Saint.** Henry VI. founded the chapel in 1441. It was finished in 1527 under Henry VII.
 17. **Supply** = *ellipsis*.
 18. **With ill-matched aims.** Such a sumptuous design for twelve surpliced scholars only.

Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
 Of nicely-calculated less or more;
 So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
 These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof,
 Self-poised and scooped into ten thousand cells,
 Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
 Linger—*10*—and wandering on as loath to die;
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
 That they were born for immortality.

CONTINUED

They dreamt not of a perishable home
 Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
 Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
 Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam:
 Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
 Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
 Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
 Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
8

6-7. In works of love and piety, as in works of beauty, we should not grudge a generous outlay, but should give to the fullness of our power.

lore = *teaching, doctrine, principle.*

9. **These lofty pillars.** There are no actual pillars. The buttresses of the walls have the appearance from within of pillars.

that branching roof. The roof is of stone delicately carved.

10. **Self-poised.** The roof depends upon the buttresses of the walls alone. There are no supporting pillars along the aisles.

scooped into ten thousand cells. The hollows of the carvings.

8. **that younger Pile.** St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Westminster was begun in the 13th century. St. Paul's was built in 1675.

whose sky-like dome. Imitated from the Oriental dome of St. Peter's, Rome.

Hath typified by reach of daring art
 Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
 The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
 As now, when She hath also seen her least
 Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
 Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
 Mindless of its just honors; with this key
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camoëns soothed an exile's grief;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,

8-10. The dome simulates the arched sky, and thus may be said to typify infinity.

11. **The silent Cross.** The emblem of Christianity.

12-14. St. Paul's is still less crowded than Westminster with the illustrious of "England's overflowing Dead."

3. **Shakespeare unlocked his heart.** This is disputed. Many critics hold that Shakespeare's sonnets are almost entirely fanciful.

4. **Petrarch's wound.** His unfortunate attachment to the Laura whom he celebrates in his sonnets. Petrarch was a great Italian poet of the Renaissance; he was born in 1304, and died in 1374.

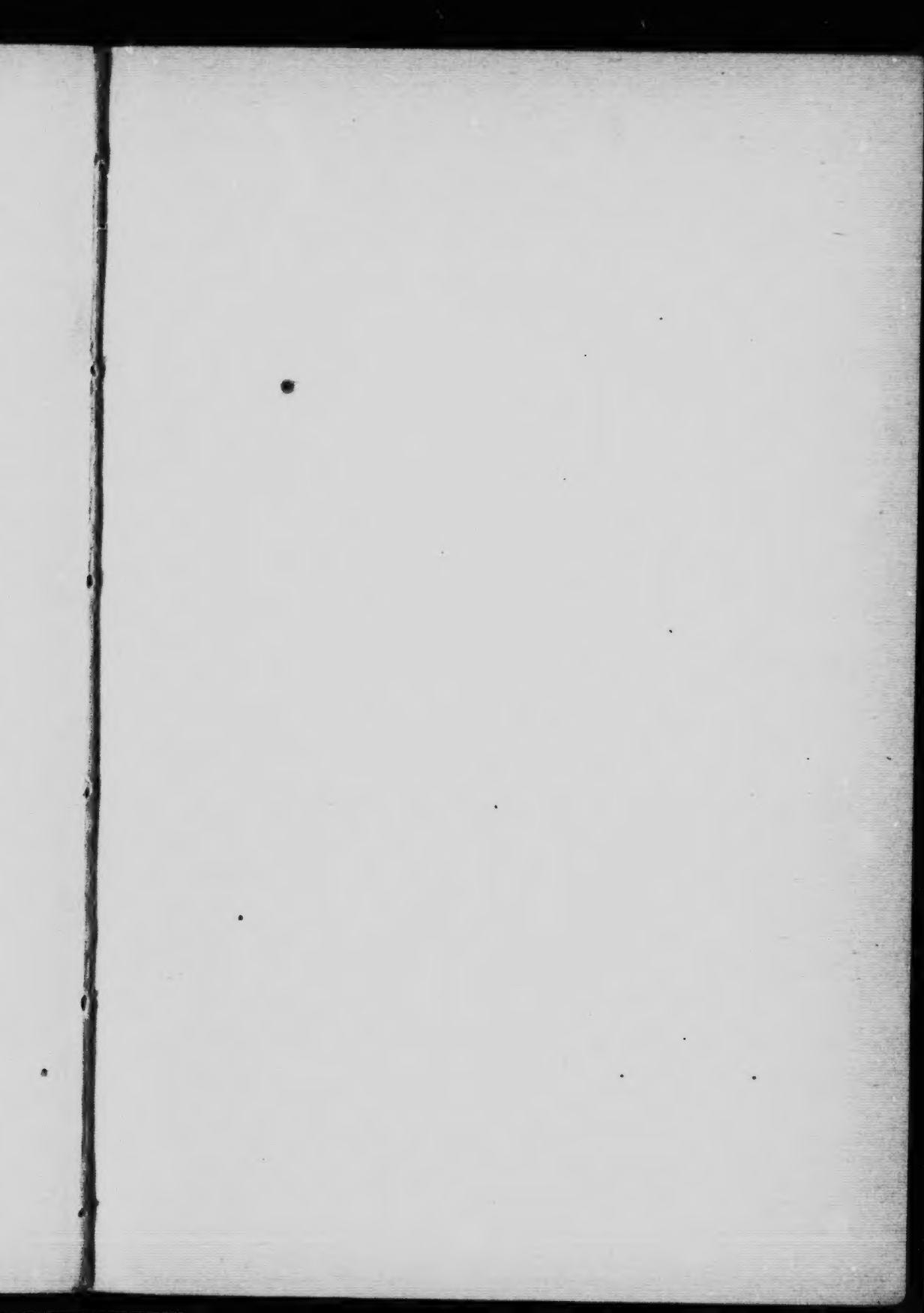
5. **Tasso.** 1544-1595. A Italian poet of great genius, but of unbalanced mind. Famous as the author of "Jerusalem Delivered."

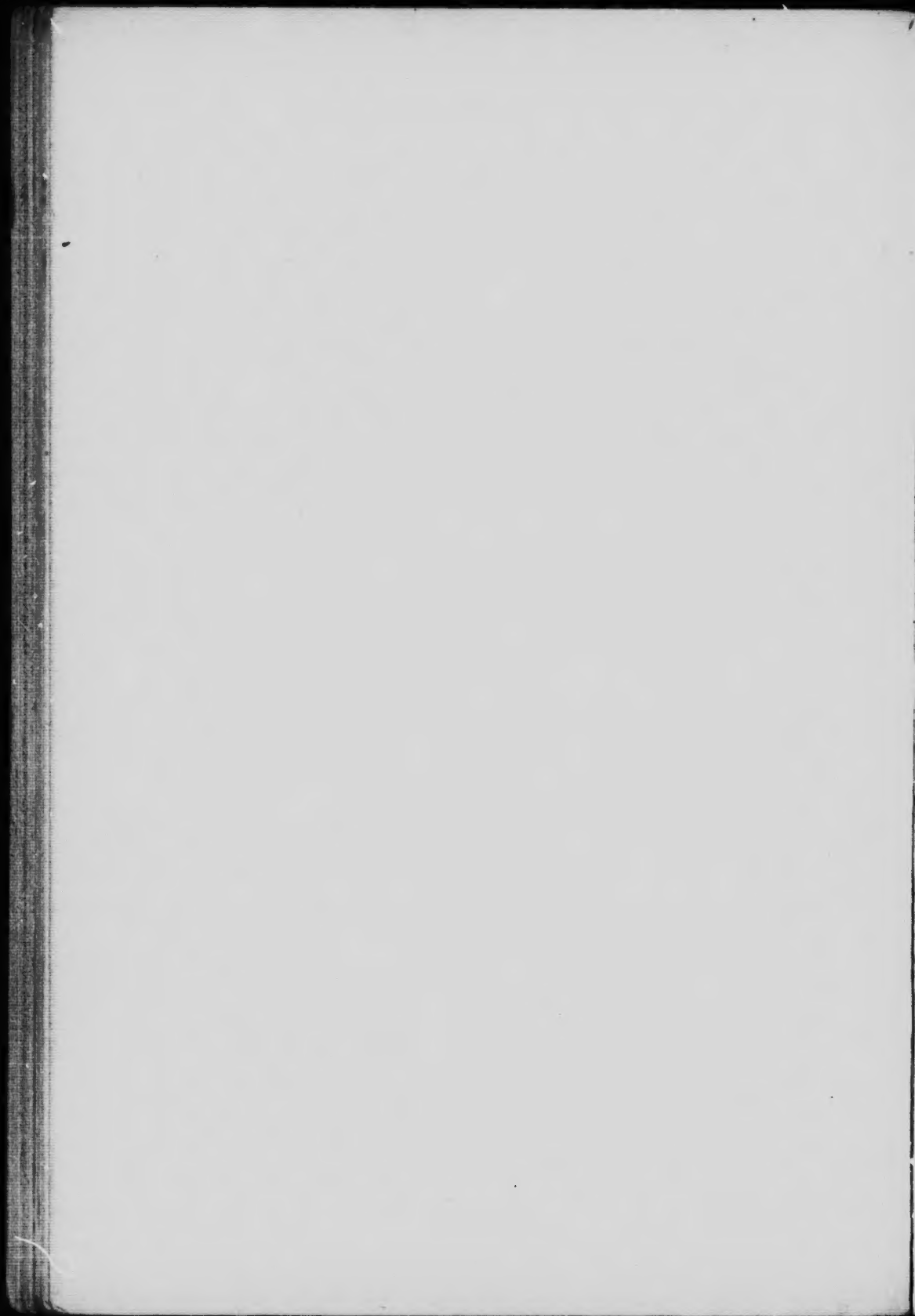
6. **Camoëns.** 1524-1580. The lyric poet of Portugal, and author of "The Lusiad."

8. **Dante.** 1265-1321. An Italian, and one of the great poets of the world. His great work is the "Divine Comedy."

It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !

10. **Spenser.** Edmund Spenser, the author of the "Faerie Queene," was born in 1552, and died in 1599. His influence has been very marked upon English poetry.





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